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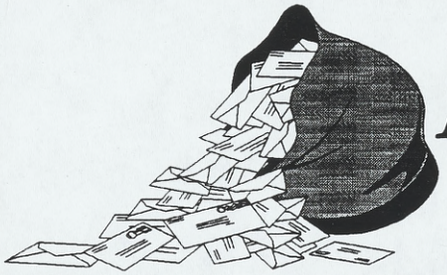

Lambda Letters Project

November, 1993 Newsletter

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608 Phone (916) 965-6851

Opinion-Editorial

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Hate Crimes Not to Be Taken Lightly

Sadly, hate crimes are very much in the news today. Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals have long been the targets of such crimes, and bias-based crimes against sexual minorities are on the increase.

However, hate crimes against people of color, religious minorities, and other similar groups are clearly increasing also. Our society is becoming less and less tolerant of people who are different. Not only are hate crimes becoming more common, but more and more people are willing to express their prejudices in public. Recently, for example, a prominent radio news commentator ridiculed the Girl Scouts for allowing their members to pledge their service to Allah or Buddha instead of to God, as had been required in the past. Apparently, in his view, only Christians should be allowed to join the Girl Scouts. In my view, the popular

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Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Issue

Support for Hate Crime Sentencing Enhancement Act Sought

One of this month's letters is a timely thank-you to Senator Dianne Feinstein, who introduced S. 1522, a bill that increases criminal penalties for hate-motivated crimes.

This bill was introduced and primarily sponsored by Feinstein, cosponsored by Senators Barbara Boxer, Ben Nighthorse Campbell (D-Colorado), and Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Illinois). It will increase by one-third the penalty for "any crime committed because of an individual's perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation." It is inclusively worded, and comes at a time of increasing incidents of hate crimes and harassment toward ethnic, racial, and sexual minority groups. A vote to strengthen the penalties for these kinds of hate-motivated attacks is especially needed now.

By signing our letters, or composing your own, you show your repudiation of racism, sexism, and homophobia. By receiving your letter in time for study, debate, and a vote, Senator Feinstein can show her colleagues—and the American people at large—an active, broad base of individuals who condemn these kinds of attacks and who support increasing the penalty for hate-motivated crimes.

Women's Issue

Can Violence Against Health Clinics Be Stopped?

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE), also known as H.R. 796, makes it a federal crime to physically obstruct access to reproductive health facilities. Peaceful picketing and other expressive conduct, such as handing out pamphlets, are explicitly allowed. In addition to criminal fines and imprisonment, this bill allows for individuals, the U.S. Attorney General, and state attorneys general to seek civil relief through injunctions and/or punitive damages.

FACE is necessary because of the escalating acts of violence—including assault, arson, and murder—that are occurring in front of abortion services clinics. On 10 March 1993, Dr. David Gunn was shot three times in cold blood as he got out of his car in front of the clinic he had opened only a month ago. We must stop terror tactics and protect a woman's right to have an abortion.

H.R. 796 has been approved by the House Judiciary Committee and closely resembles the Senate version, S. 636, which was approved by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee in June. Both bills protect all reproductive health facilities, including those that counsel against abortion. Opposition to the bill has focused on its impact on the First Amendment rights of protestors. Language has been added to the original bill to clarify that FACE does not prohibit peaceful picketing.

Ten states, including most recently Massachusetts, have already passed similar pieces of legislation. Certainly we can do so on the national level and not leave a woman's safety to chance in any state. Attorney General Janet Reno wholeheartedly supports this measure. The bill's authors are Charles Schumer (D-New York) and Constance Morella (R-Maryland) in the House and Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) in the Senate. Your letter of support to the House is urgently needed.

Lambda Letters in Action?

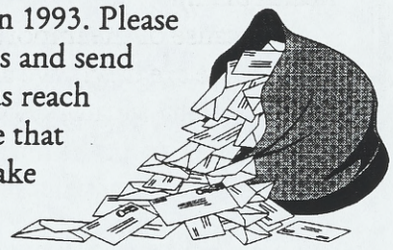
LLP Members Urged to Return Letters Quickly

Timing Is Everything!

In October we received letters from 66 percent of the people on our mailing list, down slightly from our usual 70 to 75 percent. In addition, a number of letters came in so late that the Governor had already announced decisions on two of the bills covered by our letters. Thus the letters had no chance to affect his decision.

It's not uncommon for us to receive signed letters that are two and three months old. The political process does indeed grind exceeding slow, but late letters do not help: they have no influence on the process.

We are in striking distance of collecting 29,000 letters in 1993. Please send us your letters and send them soon. Help us reach our goal and assure that your letters can make a difference!



Entertainment '94 Offers

Check Out Our Last Page!

If you live in Fresno, Napa, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, or Sonoma counties, the last page of this newsletter will contain a partial list of the restaurants and other businesses offering 2-for-1 and half-off discounts in the Entertainment '94 book for your area. The book is crammed with discounts! Use just a few of the coupons and you'll have saved the cost of the book. *All the savings from then on are yours to keep.* Order your Entertainment '94 book today!

HIV Disease/AIDS Issue

What Should a New National Health Plan Include? — Part II

At the end of October we wrote to California's members in the House of Representatives concerning President Clinton's proposed new national health plan. As we said then, this plan has major implications for each and every one of us, not just for persons living with AIDS or others who are ill.

Some of the big questions being asked are what provisions will the bill have, how long will it take for them to be phased in, what deductibles and copayments there will be, and so on. There is a long laundry list of issues which a comprehensive national health bill should address. (See the box below for information on how you can get a copy of the health plan.)

Because of the importance of these issues (not because we are lazy!), we are sending the same letter this month to Senators Boxer and Feinstein. And over the course of the next 6 to 18 months we will undoubtedly be writing several times more on this bill and the specific provisions in it.

We also appreciate and value the input we received from our members concerning this issue and we promise to answer each of your individual letters to us as rapidly and as best as possible.

To Get Your Copy...

The Government Printing Office sells the book for $45, including shipping. You can call the GPO at (202) 783-3238; have your Visa or MasterCard ready.

You can also download a copy from FedWorld, a federal computer bulletin board. If you have a computer with a modem, you can reach FedWorld at (703) 321-8020 (no parity, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, ANSI emulation). If you have access to the Internet, you can use the `telnet` command to connect to `fedworld.gov`.

Lambda Letters Board Update

New Board Member Announced

Lambda Letters is proud to announce that Mary Ann Murphy of Eureka has joined our Board of Directors. Mary Ann has a long history of activism. From 1973–74 she served as treasurer of the San Gabriel Valley Chapter of NOW. In 1978–79 she was treasurer of the Los Angeles NOW Lesbian Rights Task Force. She is currently on the Humboldt County Council of the Green Party. She is also on the Editorial Board of *The L Word*, a lesbian newspaper.

Mary Ann Murphy is a computer programmer. Lambda Letters' activities are heavily dependent on computers, so her expertise in this field should prove invaluable.

As noted in our last newsletter, Lambda Letters will be electing a new Board of Directors in January. You will have the opportunity to vote on the continued service of all current Board members as well as for any new candidates.

How Are We Doing?

Many of you have been kind enough to send us letters thanking us for the services we provide. Some have also sent us some constructive criticism, taking exception to a subject that we covered, or to a position that we took on an issue.
We do value your input. Please feel free to let us know how we are doing.

Are we covering the right topics?
What other topics might we cover?
Should we use one of our four letters to cover issues specific to people of color?
Are our articles informative enough?
Do you like the look of the newsletter?

Feel free to let us know!

Visibility in the Media

Thanks to Home Box Office for *And the Band Played On*

Recently Home Box Office (HBO, a division of Time-Warner, Inc.) produced and broadcasted an adaptation of Randy Shilts' bestselling book *And the Band Played On* on nationwide cable television. (HBO also allowed for a special Sacramento screening of the film as a benefit for several HIV/AIDS organizations.)

This story details much of the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including the neglect which it suffered during the Reagan/Bush years. Although there were some production problems which preceded the final version of this story, including casting, the final version was an accurate and sensitive portrayal of the early days of the epidemic.

Thus we are congratulating HBO for their efforts. After we have counted the letters we have received, we will also send a single letter of thanks (mentioning this total count) to Time-Warner's CEO.

If you happen to own any Time-Warner stock, would you please mention that information on your letter before returning it to the Lambda Letters Project? This is the kind of information which would make our input even more important to corporate CEOs.

Ad Space Available

Put Your Name Here!

The Lambda Letters Project newsletter accepts paid advertising. Business-card sized ads (3.5" × 2") cost $10 per issue. Half-page ads are available for $30 per issue. We hope that this will be one additional way in which we can continue to provide services to our members without charge. If you would like to place an ad, please send payment and your camera-ready copy to Lambda Letters along with your name and phone number. The deadline for submission is the 25th of each month.

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(The Holidays Are around the Corner)

Entertainment '94 Books for all parts of the state are available now! These books are crammed with hundreds of 2-for-1 and half-off coupons at restaurants, theaters, hotels, rental car agencies, and more. If you bought a 1993 version of the Entertainment book, that book is no longer valid. You will need the '94 book to continue reaping the great savings available. In addition, these books make great gifts!

Please use the order form on page 7 of this newsletter to order your Entertainment '94 books today. Get one book free by selling eleven books to your friends and neighbors!

House Votes for Record AIDS Funding

On October 7th the U.S. House of Representatives voted to spend $2.5 billion on AIDS programs in FY94 (October 1993 through September 1994). This is more than the government has ever spent in one year fighting AIDS. The money was included in a compromise measure to provide funding for federal health education and labor programs. The new funds will allow significant increases in AIDS research and treatment programs. Although 239 Democrats and 71 Republicans voted for the bill, 12 Democrats and 103 Republicans voted against it. Consult the table accompanying this article to see how individual members of the California House delegation voted.

House of Representatives Vote on AIDS Funding

Name	Party	Yea	Nay
Baker, Bill	R		×
Becerra, Xavier	D	×	
Beilenson, Anthony	D	×	
Berman, Howard	D	×	
Brown, George	D	×	
Calvert, Ken	R		×
Condit, Gary	D		×
Cox, Chistopher	R		×
Cunningham, Randy	R		×
Dellums, Ronald	D	×	
Dixon, Julian	D	×	
Dooley, Calvin	D	×	
Doolittle, John	R		×
Dornan, Robert	R		×
Dreier, David	R		×
Edwards, Don	D	×	
Eshoo, Anna	D	×	
Farr, Sam	D	×	
Fazio, Vic	D	×	
Filner, Bob	D	×	
Gallegly, Elton	R		×
Hamburg, Dan	D	×	
Harman, Jane	D	×	
Herger, Wally	R		×
Horn, Steve	R	×	
Huffington, Michael	R		×
Hunter, Duncan	R		×
Kim, Jay	R	×	
Lantos, Tom	D	×	
Lehman, Richard	D	×	
Lewis, Jerry	R		×
Martinez, Mathew	D	×	
Matsui, Robert	D	×	
McCandless, Al	R		×
McKeon, Howard	R		×
Miller, George	D	×	
Mineta, Norman	D	×	
Moorhead, Carlos	R		×
Packard, Ron	R		×
Pelosi, Nancy	D	×	
Pombo, Richard	R		×
Rohrabacher, Dana	R		×
Roybal-Allard, Lucille	D	×	
Royce, Edward	R		×
Schenk, Lynn	D	×	
Stark, Fortney	D	×	
Thomas, Bill	R		×
Torres, Esteban	D	×	
Tucker, Walter	D	×	
Waters, Maxine	D	×	
Waxman, Henry	D	×	
Woolsey, Lynn	D	×	

Hate Crimes

Continued from page 1

movement against "undocumented immigrants" is a thinly veiled form of racism.

We must publicly express our disapproval of prejudice and hate-based violence against any group. Let people know that prejudice is socially unacceptable. We should also be lending our time, effort, and money to organizations that combat prejudice and violence against minorities—any minorities.

The forces of hate have established very efficient means for disseminating their views. Although many groups, such as the Anti-Defamation League, the NAACP, and GLAD (Gays and Lesbians Against Defamation), have developed effective programs to combat hate, they need money and volunteers to make those programs work. Visible lesbians, gays, and bisexuals providing support to these groups will help cement alliances with other minorities. If we help them, they will be more inclined to help us. Also, the success of these programs against hate are bound to reap benefits for all minorities, including lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. We urge you to support the organization of your choice that combats hate-based prejudice in our society.

Boyce Hinman
Cofounder of Lambda Letters Project

Are You Upset with Your Representative?

If you are upset at how your Representative on the table on the previous page voted (or has voted in the past), don't just sit and fume! We would be more than happy to send you the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your legislators and other elected officials. Send a request along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

The Lambda Letters Project
6212 Silverton Way
Carmichael, CA 95608

Military Fight Needs Financial Support

The issue of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the military is now in the federal courts. There are at least three cases—those of Joseph Steffan, Keith Meinhold, and Mel Dahl—in which decisions could overturn current and past military policies affecting sexual minorities. The court decisions at the lower level have been favorable, but they are being appealed by the government. The principal legal organization fighting against the appeals is the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (LLDEF). They need money to fund their fight. If you can, send a check to them at:

606 South Olive Street, Suite 580
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Please Post Our Flyer

If you live in Sacramento or San Diego counties you will find an Entertainment '94 flyer on the last page of this newsletter. We urge you to help us sell the book by making copies of the flyer and posting them in any appropriate place, such as office bulletin boards, in book stores and bars, etc. Be sure to get permission if necessary. We need to sell 300 Entertainment books to help cover our costs. Posting the flyer can help us reach our goal of selling 300 books. Thanks for your help!

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